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SPAIN AND ARGENTINA

By Felix Morley

The policy of the Department of State in relation to the far from ideal governments of Spain and Argentina reveals uncertainty of purpose, confusion of planning and incompetence in execution. Taken together, these factors are discouraging for all who wish to see the United States exercise firm leadership for a better international order.

They add to the evidence that the Truman Administration has no clear principles in mind for the conduct of foreign policy and consequently is following an erratic course charted on short-range expediency. The President is continuously asking for more military power -- unqualified draft extension and peacetime conscription -- to make his foreign policy effective. He is as continuously failing to show how the Administration would use this power constructively if it were granted by the Congress.

Argentina and Spain are not the only instances which give substance to the Republican charge that our post-war foreign policy is "incoherent and inefficient". But for dangerous futility, recent actions in regard to those Governments are outstanding. And in both these cases the repercussions from our failures are likely to be felt for a long time.

The mistakes which have been made are the more serious because of the vital importance of a very careful and well-judged American attitude toward these leading Latin nations. Argentina is economically the most progressive and historically the most stable country in South America, with a commercial and cultural attainment which fully entitles it to compete with the United States for leadership in Pan-American affairs. Catholic Spain is the last firm bulwark against Communism on the Continent of Europe, which of itself explains the bitterness of the Russian denunciations of Franco. Both Spain and Argentina are important to us commercially, but more so politically.

From the viewpoint of general human welfare it is difficult to imagine any new disaster more superfluous at the moment than another revolution in Spain. This could only serve to

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intensify the profound disorganization of Western Europe, and to force many already on the edge of starvation into even greater misery and suffering.

II

The fiasco of our intervention in the recent Argentine presidential election has already been discussed in HUMAN EVENTS (March 27). It was there pointed out that if we have decided to scrap the traditional American policy of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other nations, we must without delay substitute some new principle for the one which is discarded. A policy unrelated to principles of any kind, directed by appointed officials who are all too often men of inferior wisdom, training and experience, is almost certain to be a succession of blunders. Unprincipled policy will be more, not less, disastrous when backed by the overwhelming power the United States is now able to exercise.

With the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations the American people were encouraged to believe that new principles of foreign policy had been substituted for those of isolationism. The very first paragraph of the first Article of the Charter states that its purpose is "to take effective collective [italics supplied] measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace . . ." The second Article (Paragraph 7) then carefully limits the sphere of collective action by stating that: "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state . . ."

In Argentina, we first demonstrated that we did not consider Colonel Perón's candidacy a threat to peace. If this had been the case we would have been obligated under the Charter to raise the issue before the United Nations Security Council, the more so because the Buenos Aires Government is a Member in good standing of the United Nations.

But, while recognizing that Perón's presidential candidacy was essentially a domestic matter, we none the less intervened, to the annoyance and alarm of most other Latin-American governments, in order to effect the defeat at the polls of a man whom the Department of State did not hesitate to denounce in unbridled terms. In an admittedly fair and well-conducted election the Argentinian electorate properly told us to mind our own business, placing Colonel Perón in wholly legal executive power for the next six years.

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III

Our blundering unfortunately did not stop with the Argentine election, on February 24. It was a week after this, on March 4, that the Department of State released a list of documents, selected to indicate Spain's subservience to the Axis. From this publication all documents pertaining to Franco's coöperation with the Allies were omitted. This very partial Department of State publication is now cited by Russia as a chief argument for collective intervention in Spain. We handed Stalin the cards which he is playing.

It is, of course, no accident that the Polish delegate to the Security Council, acting in concert with Moscow, delayed introduction of the resolution for collective intervention until it was possible to assess the results of our unilateral intervention in Argentina.

The Polish Resolution, presented to the Security Council on April 17, flatly declares that: "the existence and activities of the Franco régime in Spain . . . endanger international peace and security." It then "calls upon all Members of the United Nations who maintain diplomatic relations with the Franco Government to sever such relations immediately". Additionally, the Resolution "hopes and expects that the people of Spain will regain the freedom of which they have been deprived . . ." Following this open incitement to revolt the Resolution ends with an expression of conviction "that the day will come soon" when, after successful revolution, Spain can become a Member of the United Nations.

Although the Russian, French and (significantly) Mexican delegates have supported this explosive Resolution, it is unlikely to be adopted, largely because at the eleventh hour our own Government has become aware of the dangers in the course it has been following. Approval of a substitute Australian resolution, making inquiry into actual evidence of Franco's alleged threat to peace, is the more likely immediate outcome.

But it may be questioned whether, having obtained the introduction of the Polish Resolution, the Kremlin has any further interest in what happens to it. A very real underlying purpose has already been served.

IV

Before Russia can be sure of a completely sovietized Europe, with all its States as subject to the direction of Moscow as Poland and Yugoslavia are today, there must be a

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social revolution in Spain. If this is successfully launched the Spanish, French and other diverse Communists can be relied upon to control whatever "democratic" government is established at Madrid. Spain, in turn, would then assist in swinging both France and Italy to Communism. But this Spanish revolution must start while Europe is still in chaos.

So Russia, which has long worked for a Soviet Spain, actively intervening to that end during the Spanish Civil War, for the sake of the record secures introduction of a resolution solemnly defining this impoverished country, under its unimpressive little Caudillo, as a threat to world peace. Our Department of State has greatly aided these tactics by promoting the impression that Franco's pro-Axis leanings during the early part of the war actually make him a dangerous figure today.

The Polish Resolution has already served a double purpose. It has intimated that our unilateral intervention in Argentina, with which Moscow is now developing good relations, was out of order under the clear wording of the Charter of the United Nations. And it has further placed Russia in a strong moral position to carry on its own unilateral intervention in Spain, as we did in Argentina, after the Polish Resolution is turned down. Actually the extreme wording of this Resolution strongly indicates that it was drafted so as to insure rejection, thus giving Stalin eventual freedom of action which we can now scarcely condemn.

Ironically enough, the Department of State accorded full diplomatic recognition to the offensive Tito dictatorship in Yugoslavia coincident with the Security Council's consideration of Poland's resolution to break all diplomatic relations with the defensive Franco dictatorship in Spain. It would be helpful to international order if we would stop playing favorites among dictators. If Tito attempts to seize Trieste, or if Franco makes a move against France, there would be definite acts of aggression, which the United Nations should properly move to suppress.

Lacking the overt act, as justification for intervention, it would be well for us to recall Jefferson's conclusion that:

> "We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded, that every one may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases, and change those forms at its own will."

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. III - No. 17

By Frank C. Hanighen April 24, 1946

What price UN, when UNRRA is helpless? What is the importance of Gromyko's remaining or not remaining on the UN Security Council, beside the awesome prospect of 150 millions of people suffering from starvation? These questions put the world situation into a clearer perspective during the past week, as Mr. Hoover's address from Cairo and Mr. Truman's appeal for food-saving dwarfed the political maneuvering in the New York UN meeting. Indeed, as further news came from Iran, the prestige of the new league diminished. More and more observers came to believe that "Russia has got away with it"; and this impression darkened the hopes, never very bright, for positive achievements at the Paris Peace Conference, opening this week. Hope principally rose or fell as bulletins reported movements of grain ships or a dry spell in the Middle West.

It is well so. Plagues and famines, we should remember, have in earlier times altered the course of history and the foundations of previous civilizations have crumbled before the assaults of malnutrition and micro-organisms. Today, it is possible that lack of nourishment is producing diseases which in turn have profound political effects. Thus, Leigh White, Chicago Daily News correspondent, reports that the Great White Plague is responsible for "at least part" of the civil strife in Greece. White cites UNRRA figures to show that one out of every four persons in that unhappy country is suffering from tuberculosis -- a rate which is about 14 times as high as that in the United States.

A Greek doctor, employed by UNRRA, informed White that the great majority of political extremists in Greece are tubercular; and he estimated that at least two-thirds of all Greek Communists suffer from the disease, which springs in large part from undernourishment. Since t.b. victims are subject to alternating periods of exaltation and depression, their political as well as physical temperatures are similarly affected. It is a fair assumption that there are comparable repercussions of malnutrition on political trends in other hungry European countries.

The plague in the time of the Antonines is believed to have contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire. The Black Death of the Fourteenth Century played a large role in the decline of feudalism. Will the world famine today be regarded by historians as a cause of the breakdown of private capitalism?

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Impartial observers are becoming increasingly dubious about the Republican Party's confident claims of success in next fall's congressional elections. On the surface, the possibility that the GOP will win the 27 seats necessary to obtain a majority in the Lower House seems likely in view of the fact that in the last off-year election, 1942, the Republicans won 44 seats and came within a narrow margin of taking over control. The truth is that there are too few seats still in Democratic hands, in Northern rural areas, for the Republicans to conquer; and the big bloc of urban working-class constituencies shows no signs of deserting the Democratic label. It is among the latter that the Republicans must make gains, and that is not an easy task.

The new Republican Chairman, B. Carroll Reece, is not exactly dynamic nor has the Party shown any indication of developing a program likely to sweep the voters off their feet, particularly those of the working class. It is answered that the Party does not need any such intoxicating evangel; it will roll in on the basis of Truman's mistakes. But the Democrats are counting not a little on the expectation that by next fall business will be so active and average prosperity will be so high that the voters will be disinclined to throw out the reigning party. The Democrats, however, are not placing all their hopes on such a consoling picture. They are working hard, and it is understood that they invested much money in local Missouri elections early this month winning several formerly reliable Republican strongholds.

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The effect of the PAC efforts still remains uncertain, and there are a number of factors which must remain unknown for some months. A prominent Republican figure, very accurate in forecasting elections in the past, writes to us that predictions now would be premature, but adds that if he were forced to make a wager he would say "the two parties will come to the House in a photo-finish".

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The American press is assuming a lot when it expresses confidence that, in view of the reversal of our policy towards Argentina and our desire to hold the Rio Conference, the way will be easy for restoration of inter-American harmony. That, in truth, depends a great deal on what Perón, of Argentina, will do. The new President sits in a very strong bargaining position. Economically, Argentina enjoys great advantages. The world desperately needs Argentine beef and wheat; and Britain and the United States seek to sell their industrial goods in the Argentine market. Meanwhile, Moscow sends a trade mission to Buenos Aires. Politically, Perón savors the fruits of victory: he has defeated a United States policy; and both Washington and other Latin-American chancelleries want him in a hemispheric organization. Perón can heal inter-American strife; or he can exacerbate it. Which course will he pursue?

On the matter of feeding Europe, the Argentine leader has exhibited a broad spirit of world helpfulness; and towards the United States he has commendably shown no bitterness. On the other hand, he has taken a harsh line towards the Government in Montevideo; denouncing the Uruguay-Argentina radio pact, placing obstacles in the way of tourist traffic which Uruguay prizes, and refusing to ship much-needed wheat to Uruguay. Also, observers wonder if Perón has discarded his former plans for an "Argentine bloc", to include Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile. There are frequent rumors of special relations between Perón and President Morinigo of Paraguay, and between the Argentine military clique and that of Chile, now in political ferment. As for a hemisphere pact, Perón has not expressed himself. But it should be recalled that in the past Argentina has always been less coöperative at inter-American conferences than other Latin-American states. Perón, in short, is a question mark.

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France seems in imminent danger of compounding the mistakes of the Third and Weimar Republics. The new Constitution, which will be submitted to a referendum on May 5, provides for a weak Executive and an all-powerful single-chamber Assembly elected by proportional representation. Most observers are agreed that the weakness of the Executive under the old Constitution was as responsible as the multiplicity of parties for the decline and fall of the Third Republic. Unlike the British Prime Minister, the French Premier could not dissolve the Chamber and appeal to the electorate. Whenever a difference of opinion arose between Legislative and Executive, it was the Chamber which threw the Government out of office, thus causing the constant series of Cabinet crises which marked French politics up to 1940. With the abolition of the Senate, the last barrier against an irresponsible Parliament will fall.

The new Chamber, moreover, is to be elected under a system of proportional representation not unlike the one used under the Weimar Constitution in Germany. At that time, this system, designed to give mathematical justice to all, was widely held responsible for the disintegration of German parties into splinter groups which refused to coöperate in a majority program and thus opened the flood gates to Nazism.

It is noteworthy that the French Communists are adamant in their demands for this particular form of Constitution. The Socialists are going along reluctantly, preferring a bad Constitution to no Constitution at all. M. Bidault's M.R.P. seems definitely opposed. The Communists, of course, stand most to gain, if the Constitution is adopted in the present form. As the strongest party in the Chamber, they will be able to overthrow Government after Government and thus create the confusion on which they thrive. Also, under proportional representation, the bourgeois parties are likely to disintegrate into

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Notes and Quotes

The idea that the Western Allies may eventually have to sign separate peace treaties with their late enemies is gaining ground. Referring to the forthcoming Big Four meeting in Paris, "Scrutator" writes in the Sunday Times (London) of April 14, 1946: "The most damping feature of a meeting at the highest level is that there is nothing beyond it. If the Big Four (or Big Three) cannot agree, there may be an end of united action. During the war agreement was always reached, because the pressure of war compelled it; now that the pressure is removed, it may not be so. If ultimately the Allies of the war could not agree on peace terms, conceivably they might conclude separate peaces. After all, the United States did so following the first World War, and though the fact of its deserting the League of Nations had disastrous consequences, the fact that it signed different peace terms had not."

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"I cannot help thinking that part of our trouble has been caused by the fact that towards the end of the war we ignored the rule of law. This rule of law had been built up for centuries by civilized peoples. It had been built up on the basis of Christianity and the principles of chivalry. It had been built up by the customs and usages of great commanders, and finally it was embodied in statutory form in various conventions, one of which is the Hague Convention and another is the Geneva Convention.

"We have retained the Geneva Convention which deals adequately with prisoners of war -- all sides did during the last European war -- but the Hague Convention, which deals mainly with the treatment of civilians in occupied territory, we have hardly acknowledged at all. Our troubles now, at all events, have been intensified by our neglect of the convention and the usages and customs upon which it is based. The neglect of a moral law will always mean that at some time or other the person who neglects it will suffer. Our neglect of this moral law -- I mean the Allies as a whole, and not just this Government -- is having great consequences today, and will have greater consequences as the years go on." -- Lieutenant-Colonel D. Rees-Williams, first British Legal Officer in Military Government, Berlin, speaking in the House of Commons, March 18, 1946.

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Pre-occupation with material losses has tended to make us forget the cultural and spiritual values lost in the war. The Catholic weekly, The Commonweal, (April 26), deserves credit for the following exhortation: "No property, no monument destroyed in the course of our inexorable war effort more disturbingly stirs a proper sense of loss than the Abbey of Monte Cassino. We welcome with admiration the news published by the Christian Century that in heavily bombed England, where we have thought we heard so many misunderstanding, shortsighted and even cruel things said about Italy, a group of most famous cathedrals and colleges has taken in hand a practical effort to help in rebuilting and restocking the magnificent library of Saint Benedict's abbey. . . . This is appeasement that leads to peace, and generosity which Americans can easily find too many opportunities to emulate."

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The following passage from Tacitus' Annals has a pointed meaning today: "Nero will always be regretted by the thoroughly depraved; it is for you and me to take care that he is not regretted also by the good." Substitute "Hitler" for "Nero", and you have a motto which should be hung in military government offices throughout Germany. Reports from that country indicate that a revival of Nazi ideas has sprung from a populace now in dire need of food and recalling the comparatively prosperous conditions under Hitler.

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splinter groups, just as the middle-of-the-road parties did in the Weimar Republic.

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The picture of a weakened Britain retreating helter-skelter from India is not accurate. It is certain that Britain now wants to relieve itself of the burden of ruling India, or as the Economist puts it "reduce her internal commitments". But the British negotiators now in India hold certain cards and it would be surprising if they were not played, in order to obtain some concessions from the Indian leaders in return for a grant of substantial independence.

Among these bargaining advantages are the following: (1) The Indian Army, now suffering from dangerously low morale, will nevertheless be an essential to any new Indian Government that takes over from the British. Without the British staff cadres and experience, that army will be of doubtful value. Hence, the Indians will probably want British officers to remain for a considerable period to train a purely Indian-staffed army. Indeed, General Auchinleck, on April 8, suggested this course. (2) The British debt to India, amounting to approximately 5 billions of dollars worth of blocked currency, is a pawn in the negotiators' game. India badly needs goods, particularly those of heavy industry. The British, as debtors, can deliver or withhold substantial quantities of these goods.

On other matters, there are possibilities for compromise agreements. Britain would like to keep India in the Empire. There are reasons why a new Indian Government would prefer to maintain ties with the Empire; such as, Indian relations with the Dominions, possible trade advantages in Empire pacts, etc. But, few Indian public men would care to advocate this at present because of anti-British feeling in the country. The negotiators may find a compromise in the "external association" formula adopted by Eire. It is noteworthy that the British have proposed this formula for solution of the Indonesian situation -- "external association" of Indonesia with the Dutch Crown.

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Harlan Fiske Stone was first and foremost a good citizen, in a period of American history when that definition is more easily used than earned. Appropriate tribute is being paid to the learning and luminosity of this great jurist's mind, but the firm basis of all his attainment was the absolute integrity and moral courage which Plato first defined as essential for the "just" man. These qualities, unfortunately all too rare, explain both the frequent minority opinions of Chief Justice Stone, and the fact that his dissents have so often been subsequently justified. "Mankind, despite its struggle upward from barbarism", he said in a wartime speech, "is not yet willing to accept the truth."

In his constant determination to cut through pretense and sham, Mr. Stone was an unusual man. His deep anxiety over the dubious legality of the Nuremberg trials was only one instance of the unswerving honesty, combined with profound insight, which guided him throughout an active and always honorable life. (F.M.)

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Soviet journalism is not known for its high degree of accuracy. Izvestia's correspondent, V. Poltoratsky, after a tour of the American zone of Germany, sharply criticized the American authorities for failure to carry out land reforms in their sector. "The province of Baden, which adjoins Bavaria, contains huge landowners' possessions", Comrade Poltoratsky stated. A look at the statistics would have shown the writer that 73.6 per cent of all farms in that province have twelve acres or less of arable land, and only 3.6 per cent have more than 50 acres.

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